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Above the Mist



Above the Mist

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By GEORGE I. BODINE, Jr.
with an Introduction by
PROFESSOR OSCAR KUHNS of
Wesleyan University

Philadelphia
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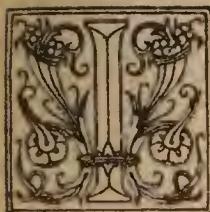
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Introduction



TAKE great pleasure in writing this brief Introduction to the Poems of my dear friend and former student in Wesleyan University. I have always had the highest regard for Mr. Bodine as a man and a friend; but I did not know that he had ventured into the field of poetry till the manuscript of the poems in this book was given to me to read.

But no sooner had I read it than the conviction grew on me that here was a real poet. It is not often that we find, in the busy marts of the world, one who is an active and successful business man and a poet at the same time, yet this is true of the author of this little book.

He has especially a deep feeling for the charm of home life, for wife and children dear; and the poems on these subjects throw a pleasant light on the domestic happiness of the poet himself.

One thing stands out in these poems more than anything else, and that is the author's sincere love for nature, with the rest and peace that come from the mountains and the stars that shine in the blue firmament above.

It would be well for all men of business if they could learn this lesson from Mr. Bodine; if they too, with him, could leave the world behind them, from time to time, and in communion with Nature get health of body, mind and soul; if they too could say with the Poet:—

*"From the din of busy cities
At last there comes release;
The silent voice of the mountains
Has whispered to me—Peace."*

And as this little book goes forth into the world I wish it God-speed, and may the many friends of the author receive as much pleasure and benefit from reading it as I have received.

OSCAR KUHNS,
Wesleyan University.

June 26, 1919

Preface



FTER all, our tastes, our ideas, our ideals are but the composite photograph of what our parents, elders and teachers planned that they should be. What infinite pains my Mother took. The wonderful mystic imagery of the east she imparted from her ever open Bible. What midnight oil those who have written books, those who preach, and those who lecture, have burned that you and I might sit at their feet and become like the masters of each particular art. What gold was spilt by men of means to found and support colleges that we might learn.

If, therefore, you find in these pages anything of virtue, thank not me, but rather the host of teachers, past and present, who gave their lives that the best that man has thought and dreamed might endlessly increase and pass on from generation to generation. They hoped that we might see the vision, that, we too, might learn "to live and love and look up at the stars."

By word of mouth and written page, by influence of one friend upon another, by love on the part of a Mother, by the myriad

forms of human communication the eternal progress toward nobler things goes on and on. Like the drops of a local shower that adds its mile of coolness to the surface of the Amazon in the mighty stream's long journey from the Andes to the Atlantic, so we too live for a moment and with a little splash add our share to the great bulk of atoms slowly moving toward the sea. My own hope is that as you seek out some secluded spot and read these lines you may be lifted, as other men have lifted me, above the mist to the heights, where I myself have chosen to dwell and where, thanks to them and to Him, I have seen the whole course of the river and the sea beyond.

To My Father
Successful, Christian Gentleman,
These Lines Are
Dedicated

A b o v e t h e M i s t

Thoughts Upon Overlooking the Whitemarsh Valley at Sunset

*Over hill and over dale
Ever smiling back at you,
Whitemarsh Valley steals away
Mingling with the azure blue,*

*Mingling with the mists above,
Thunderheads aloft on high,
Mingling with the blazing sun,
Monarch of the domèd sky.*

*When at last his course is run,
When the blood red sun is set,
Tinted houses, hills and trees,
Keep the Valley smiling yet.*

*Ye who list to nature's call,
Love the out of doors so much,
Feel the presence of your God
In the thrill of nature's touch,*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

*Tell me where on this green earth
Almighty God has worked his will
With more splendor, pomp and power,
Than out here on Chestnut Hill.*

*Each bird, bee and bush and flower
Does its share to fit the scheme,
The whole world in harmony
As if a part of some great theme,*

*A theme that goes beyond the stars,
That dot the sky in gorgeous night,
A theme that makes the firefly's glow
A brother to the comet's light.*

*Everything about us blends—
Carries out the plan divine;
Oh Christ! we pledge our troth anew
To blend our wills and make them thine.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

Dog Lake—Canada

*Midnight was gone—’twas an hour past
And I wished the night would forever last.
For I had found a place, distinctly wild,
A lake that was Nature’s very child.
The moon on high shone bright and clear,
But a low, gray mist engulfed our sphere;
Everything was immensely still,—
Except for the whistle of whip-poor-will,
Or the cold sharp splash of a big green bass,
Off for a call on his pretty lass,
Or the noise of the stones along the shore
As sly raccoon takes one step more,
Or the laugh of the loon, most weird of sound
As the jeer was echoed the lake around.
And then I almost seemed oppressed
By the silence in which the lake was dressed,
To be startled anon by the distant quack
Of the duck that man named canvas-back.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

*When lo! a hound from far away,
Who bayed and longed for the break of day.
While the night wore on with the hours' increase
There came upon me an infinite peace,
Blending with that silence long,
Nature's rest before the dawn.
Ere the wakened duck begin their flight,
Adown the lake and t'ward the light.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

Stockings

*When I was a tot in knee breeches,
With stockings way up to my knees,
I knew a heap less about whiskers,
I cared a heap less, if you please.*

*But in those early sixes or sevens
Or nines or tens it may be,
I knew well who darned my stockings,
And she was the one who knew me.*

*A sphere cut in half made of rubber
Was used to place into the toe;
Your Mother took prizes at Bridges?
Well my Mother knew how to sew.*

*Our land has produced its great masters,
Of science and sculpture and art,
But the greatest of all the great masters
Is the one who can conquer the heart.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

*Some conquer by raising great armies,
And others by leading a mob,
But theirs is a purposeless science,
Who pilfer, and murder, and rob.*

*The Nation's hope lies with its mothers,
Those who teach doctrines of peace.
God grant us a race of such women
And may our good fortune increase.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

Patience

*Peaceful landscape, peaceful picture
Tho' the thunder rolls afar
Let us pause before the shower
Poised on high as black as tar
 Peaceful picture
Could the cruel forces mar?*

*See the dust fly over yonder;
Will it blow the other way?
Will the rain dry up and vanish?
Will the peace, too, blow away?
 Peaceful picture,
Must it crumble and decay?*

*Dark and dreary grows the landscape,
Yet each tree stands out so clear
And the winds howl fierce and fiercer
As the flashes reappear.*

*Peaceful picture,
All is changed to doubt and fear.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

*Comes the rain, a wicked shower,
Drenching every nook and spot.
Why, the wind blows such a tempest,
Ties the trees up in a knot!*

*Peaceful picture,
But the peace is all forgot.*

*Never rained a wicked shower
But it left a clearer air,
There's an end to every trouble,
Comfort comes with every care.*

*Peaceful picture,
Twice as peaceful, thrice as fair.*

*Welcome, then, the toil and trouble,
Welcome, welcome each rebuff,
Be a little wee mite patient,
Solace comes; More than enough.*

*Prettiest pictures
Grow from pictures in the rough.*

King David

*He dove 'neath the stream by the wayside
A boy all naked and thin,
The sun scorched the life in the pasture,
How green it lately had been!
“He leadeth beside the still waters,”
These are the words that he wrote.
And millions have pondered and wondered
At the boy and the things that he spoke.
A Hebrew of blood rich and royal
Whom God had designed to be King,
But first he must needs be a shepherd
To watch the bird on the wing;
To watch the trout and the grayling;
The rocks, the rills, and the sky;
The flower that grows in its beauty,
To blossom, to bloom, and to die.
Night came on and was chilly,
The lion came out from his lair.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

*The boy waxed strong and courageous,
A youth that was comely and fair.
He became a poet, a singer—
The kind that whistles and sings;
The kind that knows God and his creatures,
And how he created the things.
He became a friend of those creatures;
He dared to look into the sky,
To count the stars in the heavens;
To see which ones wandered and why.
Night after night in the pasture
He gazed at a billion suns,
Called them by name at his pleasure;
Behold! The stars were his chums.
No wonder that boy saw the vision,
Raised by the Infinite God;
Thinking the thoughts of his Master,
Treading wherever He trod.
No wonder that boy saw the vision,
The vision that made him a King;*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

*The stars above for his playmates,
No wonder he learned how to sing.
No wonder his song down the ages
Can never, no never die.
“He leadeth beside the still waters,”
The rocks, the rills, and the sky.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

The Artisan's Return

'Twas just before Christmas, on the midnight express,

Hurrying home to the children and Bess,

I had in my satchel presents for all,

For Susie a doll, for Johnnie a ball,

For William a horse, a coveted toy,

To give to our rollicking, frolicking boy.

I turned in my berth, on the clattering car,

And saw from my window a beautiful star,

And strange to say, my thoughts wandered back,

O'er the ages and ages of that star's track,

And of all the places its light had blest,

I am proud to say it—our home seemed the best.

And this is the moral handed to thee,

Whoever thou art, 'Tis easy to see,

Of all the places that God's love has blest,

Remember, young friend, thy home is the best.

A b o v e t h e M i s t

Enough

*Five hundred million years ago
A God there lived who made the sun,
The moon, the stars, the hazy world,
Long, long ago when Time began.*

*As age grew into age apace,
The nations came to fight their wars,
To build their bridges, aqueducts,
Their vessels and their mighty stores.*

*And now they say we're civilized,
And here and there perhaps we are,
And yet it seems, despite it all,
This earth were but a chilly star*

*Had not that same sagacious God
Wisely placed within the whirl,
Amidst the hub-bub of it all,
One single, solitary girl.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

*For though my cup is brimming full,
My table set with royal bread,
'Tis not enough, I must admit,
Without that Girl this world were dead.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

July Fourth

*Step softly in your room, dear,
And see what I can see.
Cuddled up in a bundle,
Our own sweet Dorothy,*

*Tired out with the racket,
Tired out with the fun.
What a sleepy youngster,
When the Fourth is done.*

*Tuck her in, dear, gently,
So she will not wake.
Sand Man's been here early,
His sweet toll to take.*

*She's fit for Eden's garden!
In truth some spirit above
Has sent our little angel
To teach us how to love.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

January First—1914

*One nine, one three,
Kick him out and get the key.
One nine, one four,
Drag him in and lock the door.
Let him stay the livelong year
With quips and smiles and jolly cheer.
Let him drive the glooms away
And keep that beggar, Grouch, at bay.
Then we'll sing his praises loud
And on his head our blessings crowd.
And may we ever happy be
With our new guest, Prosperity.
The guest anew in every home,
From Tallahassee clear to Nome,
From California through to Maine,
And out upon the bounding main,
Across the land and o'er the sea
And back again to you and me.
And may we every happy be
With our good guest, Prosperity.*

My Scarab (4000 years old)

*It almost seems—it seems to me—
A pity in this modern time
To snatch Thee from Thy hiding-place
To grace this gaudy tie of mine.
With sacred rites an ancient hand
Has shaped Thee with its dextrous care,
Believing that eternity
Dwelt about Thee everywhere.
Some Princess fair of Egypt's shores
Beloved throughout the desert waste,
Perhaps has used Thee as the charm
That made her please the ancients' taste.
And when cruel Death had claimed his own
They placed Thee near her mummied form—
Hoping thus to keep quite fair
Her spirit till some judgment morn.
Greece has come and Greece has gone
And Carthage too upon the sea,*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

Phœnecia, Rome and Palestine—

All outlived, outlived by Thee.

And Charlemagne, and Luther too,

Bismarck and Napoleon bold,

England's fair Victoria

And countless temples men called old.

Each in turn has joined the dust

That blows about the desert sky—

Makes the camels brace themselves—

Stings the face and blinds the eye.

Around the sun with rhythmic pace

Many a comet passed this way

Since Pharaoh made the desert bloom

In Thy distant ancient day.

A b o v e t h e M i s t

Train Letter to a Child

*Sitting by the window—
First we start so slow,
But soon we seem to strike our pace
And then—away we go.*

*The fence looks like a fine tooth comb,
The trees go scurrying by—
The clouds would pass us too, I guess,
If clouds were not so high.*

*The wheels go buzzing round and round,
They clatter, clang and clash;
The whistle blows with might and main
And sinders beat the sash.*

*And now at last the night comes down
And lights go whizzing by.
A golden head falls in my lap—
“Aboard for Lullaby.”*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

The Hope of Psi Upsilon

*Can be so dead a fellow
Who never yet has said,
When June's fair days grow mellow
With roses blushing red,
"Within me ever springeth
A hope eternal, true,
A love that ever clingeth
Still closer to Psi U"*

*"I long to join thy sages;
I long to make thy fame
Resound throughout the ages,
With honor to thy name.
I long, when life is ended
To die with thoughts of thee,
Whose life with mine hath blended,
My loved Fraternity."*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

Patrick MacIlvaine of the Baldwin Locomotive Works

*There was a man at Baldwin's Works
Who drank just like a fish.
When sober, Patrick's workmanship
Was all that one could wish.*

*One day, not having showed his face,
A messenger was sent
To find "if Pat was sick in bed
Or out on pleasure bent."*

*"Pleasure bent" went on the file;
His chief a letter wrote—
Telling Pat that he was fired,
To come and get his coat.*

*Five days later, large as life,
Without his chief's consent,
Pat was busy at his job—
What do you suppose it meant?*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

*His chieftain straightway sent for him
And called him by his name.
“Did you get my note,” he said,
“Patrick MacIlvaine?”*

*“I got it, sorr,” was Pat’s reply,
“I read it inside out,
Upon the in it said, ‘you’re foired,’
And this upon the out—*

*‘After five days return to the
Baldwin Locomotive Works.’”*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

To "D"

*Long, long ago I knew a kid,
The fellows called him "Bon."
We played at half a million sports,
And time went skipping on.*

*Although we kept a diary true,
Of everything we did,
We never dreamed how much depends
On "when you are a kid."*

*We built a hut within a tree,
A second under ground,
We heard the chatter of the squirrel,
The baying of the hound.*

*We roasted chestnuts by the fire
When cold October came'
Or dove beneath the sparkling creek
When summer dawned again.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

*For twenty jolly, youthful years
We watched the seasons through.
And when the sun had gone to bed
We bunked together too.*

*And now a duty falls to me
To wish the best of joy
To her who casts her lot with him
Whom I knew as a boy.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

It Matters Not

*The earth will crumble back to dust
And all its wealth will rot and rust;
The stars will some day disappear
And all the worlds from far and near;
But what care we what they will do
For you love me and I love you.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

Fake Economy

*“A penny a box” for his matches—
The match boy’s request, by the way;
You ask him for two—you may get it
And live to rue the day.*

*Don’t ask for the other man’s profit.
Be satisfied not to be stung.
’Tis the savage alone who rejoices,
When another man’s neck he has wrung.*

*Now don’t go and misunderstand me.
We’d need to give nothing away,
If we always dealt fairly and squarely
With the match boy that crosses our way.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

To the Fourth Street Club on Club Night

*A dinner of shad and a brimming bowl;
A guest or two to refresh your soul;
An olive thrown with dextrous care
That's apt to land 'most anywhere.
Coffee spilt on a bosom shirt,
A scullion hurled where most 'twill hurt;
A motor bus and a busted fence;
The speed that kills when the brain is dense;
A baseball game without a score—
Give me this and nothing more.
Give me a handful of live-wire men,
Loyal and true—and tell me then
Shall we not forget the business hub
When Essington greets the Fourth Street Club?*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

The Morning After

*Get up, you fool, the hour is late,
The Chapel bell foretells your fate.
The tolls roll on o'er campus still,
The night has gone behind the hill.
The breakfast bell, tho' rest is sweet,
Rings in your ears while moments fleet.
Your coffee's cold, the biscuits too—
And everything calls "fool" at you!*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

Song: The Wise Men

*Over toward the western sea
Ruddy glows have vanished,
The star above us we can see,
All our fear has banished.*

Chorus

*Star of all the stars, the best,
Golden pilgrim of the skies,
Symbol of eternal rest,
Tell us where our Saviour lies.*

*Guide us to the manger low,
Where the babe is sleeping,
Let us bend above him so,
In his cradle peeping.*

Chorus

*Star of all the stars, the best,
Golden pilgrim of the skies,
Symbol of eternal rest,
Tell us where our Saviour lies.*

A b o v e t h e M i s t

“And Crown Him Lord of All”

*Who tries to feel the sunbeam,
 You will argue the thing away,
‘Tis the heart that’s tuned to beauty,
 That throbs with the rainbow’s ray.*

*At the dawn of the misty ages,
 When suns were drifting dust,
There was surely someone to guide them,
 And say to the atoms “Thou must.”*

*Else think of the infinite chaos,
 Of things let loose in a whirl.
Who ordered the diamond to glisten,
 And said “Be white” to the pearl?*

*Who put the warmth in the sunshine,
 That draws the worm to the light?—
Choose God, and love and heaven
 Or you’re lost in eternal night.*

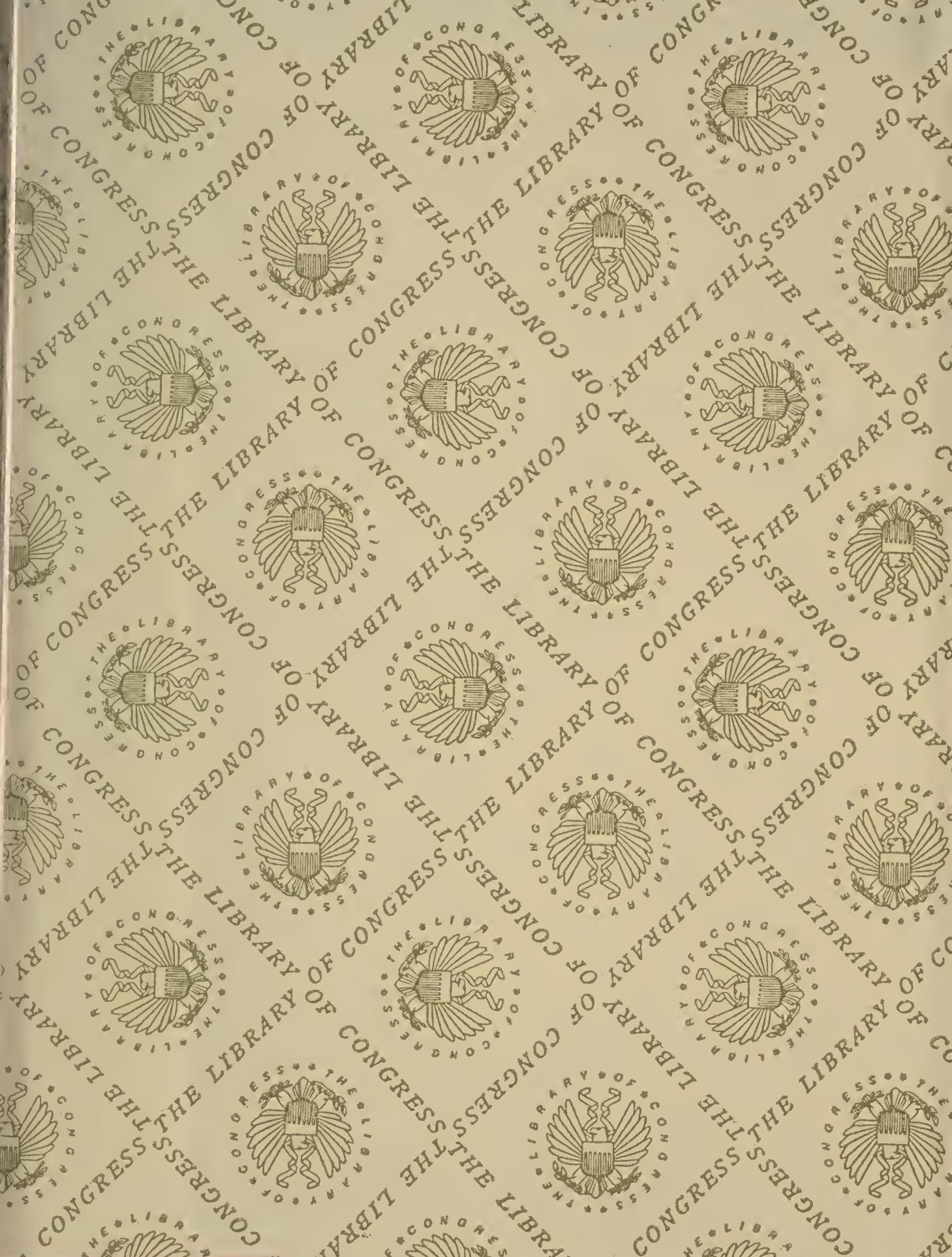
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